

On Monday, As communities across the country gather to honor those who died in service to our country, Rep. Debbie Halvorson (IL-11), the only Member of Congress from Illinois on the House Veterans' Affairs Committee, is encouraging her constituents to take time on Memorial Day to honor those who have fallen in battle, and those veterans who have returned home after serving their nation.

"As a member of a military family who has seen a step-son injured while serving overseas, I have seen firsthand the dedication and service that our men and women in uniform give our country every day. For those who have made the ultimate sacrifice for our freedoms, we must go beyond the speeches and parades each Memorial Day – we must dedicate each day to honoring their sacrifice," said Halvorson.

"The best way we can show our respect for those who have served our country and made the ultimate sacrifice, is to honor those who are still with us – both veterans and the members of our armed forces still in uniform, and their families. They deserve no less."

Halvorson will be attending the ceremonies at Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery on Monday in observance of Memorial Day. In addition to speaking out for veterans and military families throughout her district, Halvorson has worked diligently as a member of the House Veterans Affairs Committee to advocate on behalf of veterans both locally and nationally.

Fighting to expand access to health care for veterans, Halvorson's first piece of legislation introduced as a Member of Congress, HR 1335, eliminates co-payments for catastrophically disabled veterans. Halvorson also authored a bill to provide critical support services, training, and respite care to caregivers of veterans. Both bills became law after they were included in S1963, the Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act of 2010, which passed and was signed by the President in early May.

With veteran unemployment higher than the national unemployment rate, Halvorson has also worked to provide businesses with increased incentives to hire and retain veterans, and new opportunities for veterans to receive job training they need to compete in a recovering economy. Halvorson's legislation was included in a tax extension bill that passed the House on Friday that would extend a tax credit for small businesses that continue to pay deployed soldiers a portion of what their salary was prior to deployment (HR 2396).

Halvorson is also continuing to advocate for the soon-to-be vacated Silver Cross Hospital in Joliet to be converted into an expanded veterans' facility, which the Veterans Administration has called an "excellent facility" that would "meet our needs."